

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the personal interview granted on January 21, 2004. As discussed during the interview, Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 15, to indicate that the present invention is directed to methods of treating a wound using a wound dressing comprising a protein-containing fibrous component made of protein fibers. In addition, to clarify that the fibers in the fibrous component are protein fibers such as wool or silk, instead of non-protein fibers such as cotton, claims 6-9 have been canceled. Minor changes have been made to several of the other dependent claims to make them consistent with the independent claims.

Additionally, during the interview, Applicants made the Examiner aware of a related application currently under examination, having Application No. 10/016,849. A supplemental IDS that includes references cited by the Examiner in this related case accompanies this response. Also, as discussed during the interview, Applicants are submitting additional copies of the foreign documents included in the IDS mailed on February 12, 2002, for the Examiner's consideration.

Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider the rejections of the claims in light of the foregoing amendments and the following arguments and allow the pending claims.

A. Rejection of claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,447,505 to Valentine et al.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,447,505 to Valentine et al. ("Valentine"). The Examiner states that Valentine discloses the use of silk and wool surgical wound

dressings (protein-containing fibrous components) by reference to a list of surgical dressings found in the British Pharmaceutical Codex.

The listing of surgical dressings in the Valentine specification includes cotton wools, which are blends of protein fibers (wool) and non-proteinaceous fibers (cotton). There is no disclosure in Valentine of a dressing containing a protein-containing fibrous component consisting essentially of protein fibers, as required by the amended claims presented herein.

The amended method claims require that one select a protein-containing fibrous component that consists essentially of protein fibers and then form a wound dressing containing the protein-containing fibrous component. It would be understood by one of skill in the art that the dressing itself may contain other components, such as adhesives, protective coverings, and the like in order to make the dressing itself usable. However, the fibers of the fibrous component are confined to protein fibers, to the exclusion of non-protein fibers. Therefore, the Valentine disclosure of a combination of cotton with wool is distinct from the presently claimed invention.

The listing of surgical dressings in Valentine also includes "oiled silk". Applicants have submitted with this response excerpts of three articles that define the use of oiled silk. Oiled silk was used as a waterproof covering for wound dressings, and not as a component of the dressing *per se*. Furthermore, as oiled silk is waterproof, it would not possess the ability to adsorb or absorb proteases from the wound site, as the present invention requires. To further define the present invention, the limitation of a protein-containing fibrous component consisting essentially of protein fibers that allows at least a portion of said particular protease found at said wound site to be attracted to and

entrapped by said protein-containing fibrous component has been added. That aspect of attracting and entrapping a protease is not disclosed by Valentine.

Therefore, in light of the above amendment and arguments, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,447,505 to Valentine et al.

B. Rejection of claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,975,567 to Lock

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,975,567 to Lock. The Examiner states that Lock discloses cotton wool dressings as being well known in the art for wound repair. Like the cotton wool listed in Valentine, the cotton wool dressing of Lock is a blend of protein fibers (wool) and non-proteinaceous fibers (cotton). Therefore, there is no disclosure in Lock of a dressing containing a protein-containing fibrous component consisting essentially of protein fibers. As currently amended, the claims require that the fibers of the fibrous component be confined to protein fibers, to the exclusion of non-protein fibers.

Therefore, in light of the above amendment and arguments, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,975,567 to Lock.

In view of the foregoing amendment and arguments, we respectfully submit that the rejected claims are patentably distinct over the references cited by the Examiner and meet all other statutory requirements. We believe that the present Application is now in complete condition for allowance and, therefore, respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider the rejections in the Office Action and allow this Application.

Respectfully requested,

NELSON MULLINS RILEY & SCARBOROUGH

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Date



Neil C. Jones
Registration No. 35,561

Keenan Building, Third Floor
1330 Lady Street
Columbia, SC 29201
Phone: (864) 250-2260
Fax: (803) 256-7500